

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 012709

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. FRANGIE-ASAD SUMMIT THREATENED BY FIGHTING

WHILE THE ASAD-FRANGIE MEETING HAS NOT BEEN CANCELLED, NO DATE HAS YET BEEN SET, AND IT APPEARS FRANGIE WILL INSIST ON A CEASEFIRE BEFORE GOING TO DAMASCUS. ANY CHANCE FOR AN EARLY END TO THE FIGHTING DETERIORATED IN THE LAST 24 HOURS, HOWEVER, DUE TO:

--SEVERE FIGHTING IN NEARLY ALL BATTLE ZONES;

--GROWING PALESTINIAN INVOLVEMENT IN ATTACKS ON RIGHT-IST BASTIONS; AND

--THE ATTACK BY LEBANESE MILITARY AIRCRAFT ON LEFTIST POSITIONS. (CONFIDENTIAL) BEIRUT 542, 1/16.)

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2. COD WAR: BRITISH PESSIMISTIC

AN FCO OFFICER HAS TOLD EMBASSY LONDON THERE IS NO INDICATION THE LUNS TRIP TO ICELAND PRODUCED ANY MOVEMENT TOWARD A SETTLEMENT. LUNS FLOATED THE UK'S OFFER TO WITHDRAW ALL

BRITISH VESSELS FOR ONE WEEK IF ICELAND AGREES TO COMPROMISE BUT GOT NO RESPONSE. LUNS WILL BRIEF CALLAGHAN ON THE TRIP WHEN THEY MEET ON JANUARY 19.

PRIME MINISTER HALLGRIMSSON MEANWHILE TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING LUNS' DEPARTURE:

--LUNS IS CARRYING NO MESSAGE TO HMG FROM THE GOI;

--AN UNCONDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL MUST TAKE PLACE, PROBABLY WITHIN A WEEK, IF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ARE TO SURVIVE; AND,

--ONCE THIS IS DONE, NEW NEGOTIATIONS COULD TAKE PLACE, ALTHOUGH THE NEGOTIATING MARGIN IS VERY SMALL. (CONFIDENTIAL) LONDON 808 AND (UNCLASSIFIED) REYKJAVIK 93, 1/16.)

3. ITALY: INITIAL CONSULTATIONS PRODUCE NO RESULTS

CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN PREMIER-DESIGNATE MORO AND SOCIALIST LEADER DEMARTINO ON JANUARY 15 PRODUCED NO VISIBLE MOVEMENT TOWARD SETTLING THE GOVERNMENT CRISIS. THE SOCIALISTS ARE ADHERING TO THEIR DEMANDS ON THE ECONOMIC PROGRAM AND FOR "ASSOCIATION" OF THE COMMUNISTS WITH THE GOVERNING MAJORITY.

EMBASSY COMMENT: WHILE NOT ANXIOUS FOR EARLY ELECTIONS, THE DC GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF BEING WILLING TO TAKE THIS RISK RATHER THAN COMPROMISE, PARTICULARLY ON COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION. THE COMMUNISTS ALSO WOULD PREFER TO AVOID EARLY ELECTIONS BUT IN THEIR CURRENT NO-LOSE POSITION HAVE LITTLE REASON TO FEAR THEM. (CONFIDENTIAL) ROME 773, 1/16.)

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4. ROMANIA: ANTI-EMIGRANT CAMPAIGN

TAKING THEIR CUE FROM CEAUSESCU'S DECEMBER 3 CHARACTERIZATION OF EMIGRANTS AS DESERTERS, ROMANIAN MEDIA HAVE MOUNTED AN ANTI-EMIGRANT CAMPAIGN DESIGNED TO DAMPEN THE EXPECTATIONS OF THOSE WHO MIGHT TAKE HELSINKI TOO LITERALLY. EMBASSY BUCHAREST NOTES THAT THE GOR, TORN BETWEEN ITS NEED

FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE WEST AND ITS INTERNAL SECURITY REQUIREMENTS, APPEARS INTENSELY CONCERNED LEST EMIGRATION CONCESSIONS ALREADY GRANTED GENERATE A MULTITUDE OF NEW DEMANDS. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) BUCHAREST 292, 1/16.)

5. TORRIJOS' TRIP TO CUBA--SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY

IN ANALYZING TORRIJOS' CUBAN JUNKET, EMBASSY PANAMA POINTS OUT:

--TORRIJOS PRAISED CUBAN ACHIEVEMENTS, ESPECIALLY IN EDUCATION, BUT EMPHATICALLY STATED THAT SOCIALISM IS ONLY ONE WAY--AND NOT PANAMA'S--OF ACHIEVING A JUST SOCIETY.

--HIS VARIOUS STATEMENTS ON THE CANAL WERE GENERALLY RESTRAINED AND STATESMANLIKE.

EMBASSY COMMENT: TORRIJOS' CUBAN ADVENTURE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN WELL HANDLED. HIS WARM RECEPTION HAS HELPED UNDERCUT, FOR A TIME, HIS LEFTIST CRITICS BUT, BY THE POSITION HE TOOK ON SOCIALISM, HE ALSO HAS REASSURED HIS CONSERVATIVE AUDIENCE. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) PANAMA 373, 1/17.) KISSINGER

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